
A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 5:15 p.m.

In Attendance:

J. Gaines, C. Callahan, P. Guida, M. Mancieri.

Vice Chairman, Jo Eva Gaines chaired the meeting.

Because of the lack of a quorum, the approval of the minutes of the April 10, 2003 meeting will be considered at the next meeting.

Michael Resnick, Executive Director National School Board Association - Discussion of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Mr. Michael Resnick, the Executive Director of the National School Board Association briefly discussed the current status of the NCLB Act. He emphasized to board members that education is currently a high profile topic at the national level, with a possibility of increased funding. However, he warned that if the states don't "keep the pressure on", the funds may be lost.

Regent Gaines asked Mr. Resnick if he has seen coalitions forming to lobby state congressional leaders for additional state funds. Mr. Resnick told members that state-based learning coalition alliances are being formed in many states.

The group talked about the "tension" between state and local roles and the cooperation among the states and locals in determining how to meet the demands of the NCLB; i.e., the cost of the NCLB highly qualified teacher requirement, professional development activities, etc. Mr. Resnick reported that around the country states are frustrated over having to change state initiatives to meet the requirements of the NCLB Act, such as AYP, choice, supplemental services. The Regents discussed how local school districts will be able to attain qualified teachers under the provisions of NCLB.

Committee Reports

High School Restructuring Committee – C. Callahan

Ms. Callahan reported that the Regents High School Restructuring Committee had joined the department Reading/Instruction meeting held

Board of Regents Minutes
April 24, 2003
Page 2 of 3

during the week to talk about the literacy and assessment requirements of the new regs. Additionally, the work on the middle schools agenda will be going forward at the next meeting. The group discussed the section of the regulations requiring "system" changes to support students as they move from middle schools to high schools. The Regents committee will be working to provide guidance to the districts to bring about the required system changes. The Regents also discussed how the NCLB "highly qualified teacher" requirement is going to support middle schools and how the certification requirements will need to be revamped for middle school teachers.

Administrator & Teacher Quality Committee – J. Gaines

Ms. Gaines reported that her committee had met with the Policy Consortium to talk about the "highly qualified teacher" requirement. She said that Rhode Island's certification requirements will mirror the requirements as defined by the NCLB. She reported that the dilemma for the Regents/department is how to certify middle school teachers across the content areas. The group also talked about the problem of having a large number of teachers being required to take and pass this test to be highly qualified. She said that a portfolio process is being developed to serve as an alternative.

Appeals Process

Regent P. Guida told the members of the board that he will be reviewing the process that is being used for appeals to the board on Commissioner's decisions. He said that one of the problems seems to be that the Appeals committee should not be reviewing (or hearing arguments) on the case itself, but rather only reviewing the decision of the Commissioner, i.e. that his decision is not arbitrary or capricious. Mr. Guida will be calling together a group of attorneys from around the state to get input on possible changes to the process.

Budget Update

Commissioner McWalters reported that the Senate had held their education hearing and that he had spoken with them in length about aid

to the local districts. He also reported that they had been very supportive of the department's work on standards and identification of failing schools and recognized the problems related to the capacity of the department.

He told members that the House budget hearing is scheduled for May 1st, and although the department will be present, it will be an "inside" presentation.

Board of Regents Minutes
April 24, 2003
Page 3 of 3

Commissioner's Report

The Commissioner reported to the Board that the department had received a good review on the peer NCLB presentation and thought that by Friday our "formal" package would be ready to be sent to Washington for review by the feds.

He asked RIDE's Human Resource Director, Paula Rossi to speak to the board about the Governor's Fiscal Fitness Committee. She said she will be working with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Department of Higher Education to assist the Governor's "Fiscal Fitness Committee" to identify work duplication. She said that they are currently setting the "ground rules" for the work, but it looks as if they are on a six to nine month time line.

Next, the Commissioner reported that the department performance audit report has been released and Regents will be given copy.

The faculty from Hope High School has passed the re-structuring proposal. We will meet with them tomorrow to respond.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.